NEW BUILDING FOR THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE BUILDING & PLANNING

BUILT PEDAGOGY  how a building transcends its use

"Training is directed towards practical ends, while education seeks to develop a sense of quality. (...) In order for the teaching of architecture to make sense, it ought to evolve gradually from the realm of practical requirements to the realm of artistic creation." Mies van der Rohe

Architecture provides a context—in time, history, culture, for a society, in body and in mind. A building creates the opportunity for an intimate encounter between the human body (the corporeal) and inanimate fabric (matter). It is important to investigate how one might be moved by the atmosphere, by the fabric, space and light — and how this might generate further thought.

Our design for Letchworth town hall sought to be a symbol for a dehomogenised government and instrument of an accessible democratic process, engaging the citizen and uniting the community. In our work we ask how logic and ethics, configuration and construction inform the creation of enduring usefulness, in which significance - the meaning society ascribes to a building - becomes of vital importance and it is then preserved? Finally, the Faculty can not afford to be fashionable, and so must seek to achieve a balance of the advances in science with a historic perspective.

It is difficult to know what a school of architecture - the building that is - should teach. From our experience, students are generally educated despite the building.

Of course a good building can literally teach construction and aspects of environmental design; and some would simply satisfy themselves with this. But, architectural ideas come from many sources—history and theory, sociology, psychology, typology, philosophy, politics, science and technology, sustainability, aesthetics, aspects of urban design, the arts and craft. This list makes clear the Faculty must function in a profound manner, and realise the capacity to engender congregation, discussion and collective thought. It must sustain an ongoing critique from students and staff. It will constitute a vision of society, and indicate how buildings directly inform the way we live and act — alone and in a collective. In our

Isometric studies of the Waldron enabled us to distil a highly complex brief comprising hundreds of spaces into a coherent sculptural form which defines clearly the public realm.
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THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT usefulness

“We shape our buildings…thereafter they shape us”

Winston Churchill

A good architect is a polymath. The Growing Esteem strategy which aims to make ‘distinctive contributions to society in research and research training’, and the Melbourne Model, create an unusual mandate for the Faculty. It should reflect architects’ varied interests and convene interdepartmental discussion and lead on knowledge transfer. In this way it has the potential to become a public forum in the University, bringing together those interested in science and the humanities, being both a focus for the BEnv programme and an attraction for those in the other five undergraduate programmes looking to broaden their education. Inside, the café, exhibition space and lecture theatres will play a vital role in fostering debate. Outside it should invite and extend its influence into Union Lawn and the surrounding roads. Crucially, it will be important to devise a way of translating the Melbourne Model into a physical model. This we would do in conjunction with staff and students using analogy to create a shared image or idea.

A recurring question for architects is, “Is design research?” The brief describes 1,000m² of design studios and 2,500m² of research space. The question is how might your architect help staff and students to recognise that design is a branch of research and therefore the studies that support design are not seen as an adjunct but integral to the design process, and those engaged in full time research also relate their activities back to design. There is no excuse for the divide between avant-garde architecture and technically grounded work. The best combines the two. Architecture cannot afford to provoke and yet be unthinking.

The Faculty must have a Social Logic. Research into the design of laboratories in the 1990s proved that the success of an establishment correlates with the level of interaction that researchers are afforded by the morphology of the building- in effect the common parts and by

the labs themselves, here the research space and design studios. These both define the anatomy of the building and provide the blueprint for communication, interaction and usefulness. We will focus on how people enter the building, get to their space (be it a studio or an office) and how they move around inside from one facility to the next. This principle underpins our work again and again in the workplace and education buildings.

Today students find it very difficult to disassociate themselves from the continuum of life outside. They are distracted by employment and consumerism. The Faculty must create a culture of distance (time and space) away from the everyday. It must reveal to a student and their peers their processes, methods and work. It must engender close working relationships, co-learning, cooperation and teamwork. The building must create a culture of learning that invigorates the experience and does not leave peer learning to chance.

The building is an instrument of the Faculty. Most schools of architecture, building and planning arrange accommodation in a rational manner. Sadly that rationality appears to dissipate the energy. The good ones all have character, but the greats that we have visited are all remarkable for the sheer intensity of activity they engender- Ahmedabad (Doshi), Crown Hall, IIT (Mies van der Rohe), Yale (Rudolph) and Glasgow School of Art (Mackintosh). The Faculty at Melbourne should be concentric- it should provide a social focus for an architectural society in microcosm, an architectural utopia.
THE DESIGN STUDIO
the faculty in microcosm
‘intuitive leaps happen, in the reflections
people make on the actions of their
hands or in the use of tools’

Richard Sennett, The
Craftsman, 2008

The Design Studio is the faculty in
microcosm, the place for individual
productivity and collective debate. It is
the place where private reflection
and open dialogue coexist. No aspect
of architectural education should
be excluded from the Design Studio – a model may be constructed, a plan
drawn, an essay finished, a book read, a
building studied or an idea discussed.

The Studios should speak of
experimentation and inquisitiveness,
of the creative process and of making,
technique and expression. Making
stimulates eye and hand to discover
the nature of construction, technique
provides students with an understanding
of practicality and proficiency and
expression enables them to discover
emotion and investigate how meaning
may be translated into the architectural
language of proportion and form. Together they are the substance of
architectural education.

The design studio is a place for research, and whilst it might provide
a quiet harbour for thought, the studios
should come together as a
great concentric space. The spaces should be
provisional, incomplete, they should be robust, and
should invite inhabitation and change. If pedagogic
detail this will be rewarded
by the close encounter
of students and staff. Studios should respond
well environmentally to
enduring use, day and
night, through different
seasons, in particular
in their quality of light.
Architecture is a work
of definition – both
intellectual and material. And, definition is the exercising of clarity
– both ideological and technological – to make a plausible reality,
both philosophical and constructed. As a part of a building, as a work
of construction, the design studio should in this sense represent the

company we become astute and social folk. A great space whilst makes
us uniquely aware of ourself, our physical and emotional self, also
acts as a permanent
representation of the
 cosmos we are part of.

The experience of
architectural teaching
has given us an insight
into the design studio as
a space. Generally they
are unsuccessful because
they either dissipate the
creative energy or cause
extreme disruption and
conflict. We aim to embrace their complexity to create a space of dynamic
cohesiveness.

Unilever’s Evaluation Centre unites laboratories and group testing facilities for research and development in
a unique public building on the Port Sunlight campus

A mathematical formula and social and anthropological theory
underpin our 21st Century Model Prison research conducted for
the UK Government Home Office

We use the etching to distill a project to its essential form. Here entrance gates evoke
William Morris’s interest in the bucolic- an idea that is still relevant in the inner city today

This crystalline glass and stainless steel pavilion (restaurant, exhi-
bition & meeting space) will be the centrepiece of the 30,000m2
regeneration of a former light bulb factory in Moscow

Concepts to create spatial networks
throughout the faculty.
THE LIVING BUILDING tangible sustainability

We are interested in what might be described as a palpably sustainable approach, one that has a human, ethical and cultural dimension. Inhabiting a piece of architecture is like standing next to a great oak tree. One becomes acutely aware of one’s own mortality. It is humbling, and a remarkable insight into a form of environmentalism that we should all be engaged in. We believe therefore that we have a responsibility either to reuse existing structures or to conceive of ones that will last for a century or more. They should sustain continued use for generations, where regular maintenance and renewal is accepted as it is with Mackintosh’s Glasgow School of Art. Building components and products with a limited design life, which rely on newness value, are to be avoided.

We relish the opportunity to produce a heavy building, one which is grounded in environmental design but that evokes a timeless and robust iconography—a building tradition that is not glibly contemporary but part of a continuum of thought and praxis for more than a millennium.

The Living Building is not designed complete but as vessel for materials, bodies and bric-a-brac accumulated in the everyday; it is a convener of people, and in that sense a backdrop. It should be adaptable and flexible, taking on board lessons learnt, responding to changes in use, technology, fashion and social norms. We regularly consider alternative uses for buildings or parts of buildings during their design evolution so adaptation is to an extent pre-emptive rather than reactionary. The process of construction and environmental management should continue throughout the life of the Faculty/building.

Our regenerative approach to the design of the Faculty will embrace:

**CULTURE**—time is both momentary and infinite. Buildings forge connections, here within the University campus, with our individual and shared histories through our experience of place and activity. Cultural regeneration is facilitated in spaces where people gather; through the exhibition of creative work; and from our experience of architecture and the city as a cultural artefact.

**PHYSIOLOGY**—a timeframe set by technology. Resource sharing between functional groups mimics biodiversity and beneficial dependence in an ecosystem. Regeneration occurs where resources such as air, light and water produced in one space are redistributed to others in a self-supporting cycle.

**ECOLOGY & LIFE SUPPORT**—a seasonal timeframe. The Faculty could be an extension of the rural and urban landscape ecosystem supporting flora and fauna which we in turn depend on for a stable planet. Regenerative opportunities include living roof (gardens) and “oxygen positive” landscapes.

**STRUCTURE**—lasts for the life of the campus. A permanent frame which provides the basis for all regenerative elements to plug into. The primary structures/superstructures facilitate regeneration with highly-flexible design and highly-resilient substance allowing the widest range of possible future uses.

At the edges of a resilient frame, people and nature coexist in adaptable ever-changing spaces. Regenerative opportunities arise in the facades and the building fabric between habitable space.
Our association provides a holistic approach to educational design and learning delivery combined with environmental project realisation. The collaborative approach required to deliver a 6 star greenstar building should not be underestimated.

We have identified an integrated design team with local service and international outreach. The design team from CH2 has reformed to provide tested strategic thinking to integrate natural world and culture and climate and creates an environment that integrates people and the building with the natural world.

An opportunity exists to develop a new ‘living architecture’ that expresses culture and climate and creates an environment that integrates people and the building with the natural world.

The Buschow Henley (London, UK) / Designinc (Melbourne, Australia) design team: Gavin Hale-Brown (Principal), Simon Henley (Principal) & Bruno Silvestre; Stephen Webb (Director), Mick Pearce, John Macdonald (Director) & Christon Batey-Smith (Director). We are members of AIA, Green Building Council of Australia, ARB, RIBA and British Council of School Environments. Simon Henley is a member of CABE’s Education Design Review Panel.

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Together with Rubida we offer a holistic approach that views the entire learning community, the campus and its surroundings as having potential to improve learning opportunities and outcomes. This requires a comprehensive process that explores the interconnectivity, affinities and adjacencies of all campus components, its facilities, its people and all overarching strategies that the institution might have.

For further information on Buschow Henley follow link to www.buschowhenley.co.uk and for Designinc www.designinc.com.au